COT Security Alert – Malicious Email Caution

Reports of phishing emails and emails with malicious attachments or links have come to the attention of the COT Security Administration Branch. In order to avoid compromising personal information or the state network, all end users should treat any unexpected email with measures of caution to include the following:

- Never click on attachments in an unexpected email unless you can verify the sender is trusted and intended to send it. What appears to be the email sender may be a spoofed name or address or a hijacked account.

- Never reply to an email requesting Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or logon credentials for any reason and avoid any links it may contain. These kinds of requests are indications the email is not legitimate. Unencrypted email is not considered a secure mode of communication of PII by any legitimate institution. Any information that can be used to impersonate you to lenders or other institutions or to access your personal accounts is Personally Identifiable Information.

- Disregard appearances of urgency in unexpected emails. These are ploys to get users to respond before they give adequate thought to the email.

- Never use contact information in an unexpected email to verify the sender. Initiate a call using the phone number from telephone books (online or hardcopy) or official websites to check on any accounts where there is a concern.

Users should also be aware that in cases where a state user ID and password are compromised it is usually necessary to disable the email account for an unspecified amount of time for remediation of damages.

NOTICE: COT is providing this information so that you are aware of the latest security threats, vulnerabilities, software patches, etc. You should consult with your network administrator or other technical resources to ensure that the appropriate actions for these alerts are followed. If you are a network administrator and need additional information, please call the Help Desk at 502.564.7576.

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